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What's New on Our Website!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

From the Editor

As you will read in the following piece “The MCA in Baltimore,” your club is alive and well. I am particularly pleased by the “cool” rating achieved by our website—see letters to the editor. All kudos to Ben Weiss, who cracks the whip in terms of getting new material and new capabilities added.

Virtually every organization in our hobby talks about interviewing old-timers so as to preserve their profiles. However, almost nobody does it. Well, Medal Collectors is going to leap into the fray. John Sallay has identified some important technology which will permit phone interviews to be edited and archived. Vicken Yegparian has agreed to lead the execution phase of the project. He would like nominations for interviewees and volunteers for interviewing.

The MCA in Baltimore (by John W. Adams)

Our formal club meeting was well-attended by an enthusiastic group, many of whom stayed afterward, engaged in lively conversations. A good deal of the post-meeting exchange was occasioned by a fine talk delivered by Jim Cheevers, Senior Curator at the U.S. Naval Academy Museum. Jim talked to us about the many treasures held by the Museum, some of which are pictured below. The members demonstrated enthusiasm/gave suggestions for The Advisory as well as our excellent website. John Sallay’s project for interviewing old-timers also elicited strong interest.

Our awards are always a highlight of the member’s meeting. The Carl Carlson Award, given for cumulative contributions to the hobby of medal collecting, went to Hank Spangenberger. Dave Alexander gave us an eloquent recital of Hank’s many and illustrious accomplishments, which continue to this day with pithy material for the Advisory. The

Gloria Stamm Chamberlain Award, given to new scholars in the field, went to Tony Lopez. Readers of this periodical will recognize Tony’s well-researched and extremely creative articles. Well done Hank and Tony!!

Later, the officers of the club hosted a dinner for Mr. Cheevers. It was a fitting tribute for his various services, which included escorting ye editor around the Naval Academy’s campus the previous day. One cannot be help but be moved by the beauty of the Academy as well as the stirring traditions in which it is wrapped. Along the way, we discovered four unlisted varieties of Admiral Vernon medals, but there was no time to view the gold war of 1812 medals and other treasures. John and Ann Sallay drove down to Annapolis a day later, where they viewed the hallowed crypt containing the remains of John Paul Jones, his replacement gold medal, a Houdon bust and the original dies from the Paris Mint. Photos for these marvelous memorials are appended below.

MCA members Barry Tayman, George Fuld, Tony Lopez and David Menchell paid a call on the Maryland Historical Society. This visit unearthed any number of major discoveries, which will be described in detail in issues to come. Just to whet the appetite, the group located an original John Eager Howard medal in silver, as well as related family papers. Even more astounding was a group of three “Maryland Settled” medals, Betts 34, 35 and 36. Each is extremely rare in its own right but the group of three must be unique. As if these jewels were not sufficient, the group also viewed an Annapolis Tuesday Club medal, silver gilt. This visit qualifies as a feast of feasts: we can all look forward to the salivating details yet to come.



Nini (by Tony Lopez)

There have been several references to the Benjamin Franklin – Jean Baptiste Nini terracotta medallions in the MCA Advisory over the last few years. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the creation of these delicate and exquisite art pieces, it is certainly worth retelling the story here.

The history of the Nini Franklin terracotta medallions begins with Benjamin Franklin being commissioned by Congress to act as unofficial Ambassador and Minister to France to seek an alliance and assistance against the common British enemy. While living in France, from 1777-1785, Benjamin Franklin was the guest of Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont. Le Ray owned the Chateau Chaumont, a magnificent castle he acquired in 1750 in the Loire Valley, where he established a pottery and glassworks factory.

In 1772, he hired Italian artist Giovanni Battista Nini, better known as Jean-Baptiste Nini. Nini was born in Urbino, Italy in 1717, traveled to Spain, and then to Paris in 1758 where he began creating his legendary terracotta portrait medallions in the 1760's. He engraved highly detailed three dimensional busts, primarily from sketches and portraits. The subjects of his work included contemporary eighteenth century world leaders such as Catherine the Great, King Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and Maria Theresa of Austria. Nini created molds of his medallions, and was able to produce them by the thousands.

Nini was commissioned to create a terracotta portrait of Chaumont in 1771. The terracotta portrait medallion of Chaumont remains in the collection of Chateau Chaumont today. Chaumont must have been pleased with the results, since he permanently engaged the services of the artist, and Nini moved into the chateau shortly thereafter. Under their agreement, Nini was to receive 1,200 livres per year, and they would evenly split any profits after expenses.

The workshop at the Chateau Chaumont soon became a popular diversion for visitors in the Loire Valley, who would come to see the artist at work. The creation of the terracotta medallions was not the only alluring factor; Nini was gregarious and entertaining. He was also a dwarf, standing less than four feet tall, adding to the unusual appeal of a visit to Chateau Chaumont.

In "*The Memoirs of Isaac Mathieu Crommelin, Part 2: (1764-1782)*," Crommelin includes an entry on "The Astonishing Art of Nini." He reveals a rare insight into the personality and unusual character of Nini when recalling a 1777 meeting as the guest of monsieur de Choiseul:

"The third (third person he met through monsieur de Choiseul) was a dwarf named Nini, no more than four feet high. The length of his arm from his shoulder to the tips of his fingers was only fourteen thumbs. And the size of his head made one take him for a Samoyéde (an ancient Mongoloid nomadic people of small stature). But there never existed, and perhaps never will exist, a man so unusually skillful.

"As we entered his workshop he paid no attention to us. Having examined a multitude of portraits in terra-cotta of the greatest perfection and meticulous detail, monsieur de Choiseul said to him, 'Nini, you must show us your portfolio.' - 'That would be time lost and I wouldn't know where I left off.' - 'I've brought you a big connoisseur of art.'-- 'Oh yeah, just like so many others!' Nini showed us a number of very inferior works which certainly were not made by him and I paid no attention to them. Then he showed us a single sketch that was full of fire!--'Ah! Now that's something worth looking at! Here there is brilliance, imagination and skill.' Then, taking another portfolio, he spread before us his true treasures. I beheld the most magnificent engravings which anyone will ever have the privilege to see. These were done with a quill pen which delineated the most subtle

gradations and nuances thus creating a sharpness of features that was most pleasing to behold. - "Ah, that is magnificent!" I exclaimed. - "Yes, I know," replied the dwarf. "There are no two Ninis alike in the world. Look at this goblet and tell me if you have not seen anything more exquisite without exception, not even from Michelangelo's collection.

"This man had carved into the crystal goblet four magnifying lenses each facing a landscape with almost imperceptible figures. But when seen through the magnifying glass, these appeared to have a magnification of five or six times. Callot did not draw better than this man: figures, perspective, trees, terraces, attitudes of animals, everything was completed to perfection. I know how magnifying glasses can be made by friction, but I cannot conceive how they can be cut so precisely into the thickness of a crystal goblet. Carving in stone is almost a lost art because we are indeed far from the perfection of the ancients. Probably they employed techniques which this man had rediscovered.

"This Nini had fingernails of an excessive length so I asked him if they were something that he required in another one of his surprising productions. - "Are you a musician?" - "Yes." Then from a shabby cupboard he drew a respectable psaltérion (an ancient Greek harp-like stringed instrument) which he commenced to play in a most pleasant way using his long nails. I asked monsieur de Choiseul if I could offer him some money. - "Beware of doing that. Indeed, he would take us - you in one hand and me in another - and put us both out the door!"

In 1777, with Chaumont as Franklin's host in France, Nini soon undertook the process of creating terra cotta medallions portraying Benjamin Franklin. Of the many terracotta portrait medallions created by Nini, it could be argued that the most famous are those bearing the image of Benjamin Franklin.

On June 3, 1779, Franklin wrote to his niece Sarah Bache regarding the medallions:

"The clay medallion of me you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France. A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in lids of snuff boxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are incredible. These, with the pictures, busts, and prints, (of which copies upon copies are spread every where) have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do any thing that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz (physiognomy) would discover him wherever he should venture to show it. It is said by learned etymologists that the name Doll, for the images children play with, is derived from the word IDOL; from the number of dolls now made of him, he may be truly said, in that sense, to be i-doll-ized in this country."

I guess it is fair to acknowledge that Benjamin Franklin was indeed the first American Idol!

Nini originally created a number of different Franklin portrait designs based upon a drawing by amateur American artist Thomas Walpole, the son of a friend of Franklin's. The most well known, and by far the most common design depicts a bust of Franklin, facing left, wearing a fur cap or bonnet. This image of Franklin was representative of his simpler working-class mannerisms and philosophy which were embraced by the pre-revolutionary French populace. Surrounding the image is the legend *"*B. FRANKLIN* * AMERICAN*"*. Below the bust is the date "1777", and above the date, on the truncation of the bust, there is a coat-of-arms depicting an arm holding a lightning rod, with a bolt of lightning, reflecting Franklins extraordinary scientific achievements with electricity. Nini would hand sign and date each piece adjacent to the coat-of-arms, and also hand finish the details, making each medallion a unique piece of artwork. In Nini's own words, *"There are no two Ninis alike in the world!"*

In addition to the common “fur cap” variety, Nini originally created other designs; Franklin wearing Rousseau's cap, a liberty cap, a version with Franklin in the fur cap wearing spectacles, and in 1779, a larger version with a bare-headed bust. Ultimately, after considering all of these designs, the version with the fur cap only was chosen for general production.

The Franklin terracotta medallion with the fur cap became so popular that the supply ran short. Franklin responded to a 1784 request from British author William Melmoth for a copy of a clay medallion for his wife, with regrets that “*Monsieur de Chaumont, at whose pottery in the country they were made, received a request from Petersburg for one of them, to gratify the curiosity of the empress (Empress Catherine II of Russia) and having none in town, he got from me the only one left, and sent it away.*”

The Franklin mania which existed in France at the time was certainly aggrandized by the popularity of the Nini medallions, and the well-known image of Franklin by Walpole. Could the notoriety created by Nini's work have influenced the sentiments of the court of Louis XVI? There are some who claim that the Nini Franklin terracotta medallions were responsible for the French support of America, and ultimately the victory in the Revolutionary War, and the creation of the United States. (The author not being one of them.)

On May 2, 1785, Jean Baptiste Nini passed away at the Chateau Chaumont. His artistic legacy includes the beautifully detailed terracotta portrait medallions. The exact number of different designs is unknown, but there are estimates as high as 300. Following his death, the Nini family complained that Chaumont had not met all of his financial obligations to the artist. This was one of a number of financial issues which plagued Chaumont beginning in 1780, many of which were related to his strong support for the American cause of liberty.

After the French Revolution, the revolutionary government seized all of Chaumont's assets, including Chateau Chaumont. The castle at Chaumont was acquired by Madame de Stael in 1810, and in 1875, Chateau Chaumont was purchased by Marie-Charlotte Say. Say married the Prince de Broglie later that same year, and the Prince de Broglie owned Chateau Chaumont until 1938, overseeing a number of major renovations to the castle.

During the dominion of Broglie at Chateau Chaumont, the most important reference work on the Nini terracotta portrait medallions, entitled “*Jean-Baptiste Nini. Sa vie-son oeuvre*” (Jean-Baptiste Nini. His Life and Work) was written by author Andre Storelli, and published in 1896. While over 100 years old, it is still considered to be the most definitive reference on the Nini terracotta medallions, and contains many plate illustrations of Nini's artwork. Storelli uses a Roman numeral cataloguing system to identify the terracotta medallions; the common Franklin fur cap medallion is pictured and listed as Storelli LXI (Storelli 61). Copies of the Storelli monograph are rare and valuable in their own right, and in great demand by art and historical medal collectors, as well as numismatic bibliomaniacs. As evidence of this, in George Kolbe's sale of the John J. Ford library, Ford's copy of Storelli realized \$1955.00; nearly twice the pre-sale estimate.

Other than the common fur cap Storelli 61 design, all other designs of the Franklin terracotta medallions are quite rare. Of these, the only one for which I could find an auction reference is Storelli LXIV (Storelli 64), which is a “plain” version of the Franklin bust with fur cap, with Franklin wearing spectacles, (a tribute to Franklins invention of the bifocal) and described by Storelli as “*par l'absence d'encadrement et de legende*” (missing the legends and framing.) An example of Storelli 64 was sold as part of the May 2006 John J.

Ford Sale, Part 14, Lot # 329, where it realized \$11,500.00.

In the Ford catalog, Michael Hodder estimates fewer than five examples of the Franklin with spectacles exist, which is a reasonable estimate based upon the fact that recent auction appearances of Storelli 64 were basically non-existent. I have seen an example listed in 2006 and sold privately by a European Antiques dealer, another sold at a Sotheby's Paris October 20, 2005 auction (Lot # 165), one is in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, and another is pictured at antiquespectacles.com from the collection of an unknown French museum. I am aware of at least four other examples of Storelli 64 in private hands. With these nine documented pieces, I would guess there are anywhere from 10-20 examples extant. I have not these pieces "in-hand" so I cannot account for their authenticity.

The Storelli 64 which sold in the Ford Sale measured only 92.2mm in diameter, consistent with the Sotheby's example (92 mm) and others I have encountered. Basically, the relative size of the bust of Franklin on Storelli 64 without the framing and legends is roughly the same as those with the framing, so the diameter should be smaller without these outlying elements. The only exception I located is shown in Paul W. Greenslet's "*The Medals of Franklin*" where a picture of Storelli 64 appears, noted to be 120mm in diameter. I am fairly certain, however, that the listed diameter is an error. On the framed Franklin pieces with legends adding the additional elements increases the diameter; these usually measure between 113 and 120 mm in diameter.

There is another version of the Franklin medallion with spectacles, which also includes the legends and framing seen on the common Storelli 61, listed as Storelli LXIII (Storelli 63). The description of Storelli 63 notes that the medallion has the "*Memes details . . . comme aux medaillons precedents*" (same details . . . as the preceding medallions), but "*avec cette*

difference toutefois, que l'artiste a mis ici, sur le nez de son modele, un paire de lunettes dont les branches passent sur les cheveux et disparaissent sous le bonnet" (with this difference however, that the artist put here, on the nose in its model, a pair of glasses whose branches pass on the hair and disappear under the bonnet.) The "preceding medallions" which Storelli indicates refers to the designs of the common Storelli 61 design with the fur cap only. The plate #63 pictured in Storelli is identified as being from the "*collection du prince A. de Broglie*" and thus was presumably the original in the collection of the Chateau Chaumont at that time. Storelli 63 is exceedingly rare, likely an R-8. I am only aware of one example in private hands, and the example at Chateau Chaumont. I spoke with George Fuld, and he believes he may have seen a third example in a New England collection in the 1950's, but half a century later, he is uncertain.

In examining the plate example of Storelli 63, there are additional obvious differences between the design of this medallion, and that of Storelli 61, notwithstanding the spectacles. Noteworthy differences in the legends and date include:

- The legend reads "**FRANKLIN* *AMERICAIN**", missing the first initial "B."
- The legend is accented with tiny 5-petal cinquefoils rather than 4-petal florets
- The date "1777" is much larger

Upon closer examination, other differences become evident when comparing the bust of Franklin. The most obvious, at least those which first jumped out at me, were:

- The neck ruffle is of an entirely different design

- The proportional size of the head to the shoulder is different
- The head tilts back differently

Contrary to Storelli's description, as I continued to compare the differences in the Franklin busts of Storelli 61 and 63, it became apparent that the two busts are entirely and distinctively of a different design. Further examination reveals that the Franklin medallion with spectacles seen in the Ford sale, Storelli 64, has the same matching characteristics and design as its bespectacled Franklin brethren, Storelli 63.

Nini's bust of Franklin in Storelli 61 has a much "chubbier" appearance when compared to the more slender appearance of Franklin with spectacles seen in Storelli 63 & 64. The proportionally smaller shoulders in Storelli 61 and larger shoulders in Storelli 63 & 64 amplifies this effect. For this reason, in keeping with familiar numismatic nomenclature, I have designated the two different bust designs as "Large Head" (Storelli 61) and "Small Head" (Storelli 63 & 64).

The two designs do seem similar, which would account for the fact that this distinction has not been previously noted, and was missed entirely by Storelli and others. In actuality, they are completely different in almost every respect. In order to establish and document the differences between the two busts, I have come up with 20 specific differences between the "Large Head" and "Small Head" Nini Franklin busts, and created a graphic to identify them. In addition to the different design busts, the coat of arms seen on the truncation of the bust of Franklin is also of a different design on Storelli 63 & 64, and I have also made a graphic delineating those characteristics.

The authenticity of the Nini Franklin terracotta medallion with spectacles in the Ford sale was questioned by some, primarily due to differences such as the lack of detail on the fur

cap when compared to that seen on the common Storelli 61 design. The original Franklin Storelli 63 plated in Storelli also lacks the fur cap detail, as does every single example of Storelli 63 & 64 of which I am aware. The reason for this is that the bust of Franklin is simply of a different design, which includes less detail in the fur cap. This should relieve concerns about the genuineness of the Ford example.

Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont was a staunch supporter of the American cause. He promoted this philosophy not only by financial and political support, but by promoting America's ambassador, and financing and manufacturing the popular Franklin Nini terracotta medallions. Chaumont also commissioned French artist Joseph-Siffrede Duplessis to paint what was, and is, the most famous and familiar portrait of Benjamin Franklin, that seen on the Hundred Dollar bill. His support of America caused him severe financial problems and conflicts with his creditors and debtors, as well as his employees. At times financial disagreements arose between Chaumont and his famous tenant, Benjamin Franklin. Ultimately, his support of the United States, and their success, created a revolutionary spirit which moved across the Atlantic Ocean to his homeland, ultimately resulting in the loss of his beloved Chateau Chaumont.

Chaumont's friendship with Benjamin Franklin endured, however, and they remained friends and correspondents until Franklin's death in 1790.



Storelli LXI



Storelli LXIII



Storelli LXIV

Nini's Franklin Coat of Arms

Large Head

(no spectacles)



Small Head

(with spectacles)

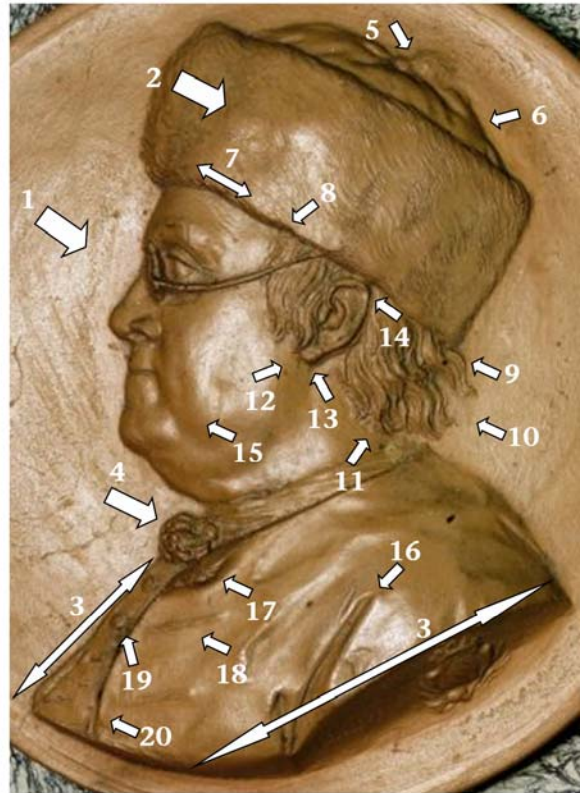


Two different Coats of Arms Jean Baptiste' Nini also designed the Coats of Arms seen on the truncation of the bust of Franklin's terra cotta medallions. Honoring Franklin's work with electricity, it displays a hand holding a lightning rod, and a bolt of lightning. The coat of arms also differs between the two busts for Franklin. Shown above: 1) lightning bolt strikes sideways to end of rod on "large head", downwards on "small head"; 2) shield is shaped differently with smaller, more oval cartouche and side panels on "small head"; 3) leaves on sides of "large head" are longer, and curve. The most noticeable difference between the two pictures is the shape and length of the base of Franklin's shoulder, with the "small head" being significantly longer and having a greater arc. Note that Nini signed and dated both pieces by hand; the initial "F" stands for the Latin "fecit", meaning "he made it".

Two Nini Franklin Terra Cotta Busts



**Large Head
(no Spectacles)**



**Small Head
(with Spectacles)**

***MCA Advisory*, Volume 11, no. 5, June 2008, pp. 3-10. 'Mystery Solved? Voltaire, 1777 Franklin, Hume and D'eon Medals' by Tony Lopez** (by Chris Eimer)

Tony Lopez is to be congratulated for his analysis of the Washington, Franklin and Hume medals and that of D'eon, in the June issue of the *MCA Advisory*. His painstaking examination of the letter punches and comparisons with the portraits demonstrate beyond any doubt the physical relationship that they share.

The stylistic parallels between the Washington and Hume portraits had indeed been a subject of discussion between Richard Margolis and myself some twenty years ago, and it is Richard, I recall, who was the first to broach the subject between us. However, any discussion that we did have was based on no more than the portraits. Tony Lopez has therefore broken entirely new ground in the way that he has approached the question of both the portraits and letter punches, and the common linkage between these medals.

In the second or supplementary part to his paper, he considers the connections between the medals and their likely source and concludes that they were struck in England and 'designed by Wedgwood-Bentley artists with the support of Josiah Wedgwood, and possibly his partner Thomas Bentley. As such, he proposes that 'this group of medals be heretofore referred to as the "Wedgwood Historical Medals."

In support of this attribution, Tony quotes, at second-hand, a piece of correspondence (July 1777) from Wedgwood to Bentley, which possibly relates to the Washington 'Voltaire' medal, and which refers to Wedgwood's 'objections to striking medals from the bronze you sent me' (p. 7, left hand column). Tony also refers to an engine turning lathe, which Wedgwood had acquired and

suggests that 'Wedgwood familiarised himself with the medal making process, and was able to incorporate medal making equipment into his own operations (p. 8, r.h.c.). He also states that Wedgwood and Bentley had the 'artistic skills at their disposal . . . for striking these important medals' (p. 9, l.h.c.).

The manuscript evidence suggests that the successful process of medal making, which actually encompasses a great many facets, depends less on 'artistic skills' than it does upon the ability to engrave upon steel, the technical requirements of correctly tempered steel for dies, as well as the correct hardness and gauge of the metal for the blanks, not to mention the particularly vexing problem of the collar in which the die would sit, prior to sinking. Time and time again, we learn of the failure of these tools and can only conclude that medal making in all its myriad detail required a considerable amount of specialist engineering skill and technique.

These are skills quite different to those deployed by the modellers working for Wedgwood and Bentley in their own, no less specialist areas of endeavour. Wedgwood might well have acquired an engine turning lathe and might or might not have familiarised himself with the medal making process, but it is unclear how he was able to effectively incorporate medal making equipment as well as the specialist expertise incumbent on its use into his own operations. Thus when Tony suggests that Wedgwood and Bentley had the 'artistic skills at their disposal to be responsible for striking these important medals' (p. 9, l.h.c.), I feel that he understates the specialist skills required of dedicated full-time medal makers.

The correspondence of July 1777 may well refer to Wedgwood and his objections to striking medals, but one would, I believe, need to know the precise context in which this is being discussed, and of course examine the documents at first hand, before coming to the

conclusions that have been reached. In the discussion of the Washington 'Voltaire' medal, to suggest that this correspondence proves that the medals were struck by 1777, and perhaps earlier' (p. 7, r.h.c.) cannot, surely, be sustained. Wedgwood says no more than 'my objections to striking medals from the bronze you sent me rather increase'.

It certainly raises a great many questions, for which I feel we presently have few answers, but it makes absolutely no reliable reference to a specific medal. Nor, I believe, can this correspondence be directly linked to the Wedgwood ceramic with the 'Voltaire' portrait of Washington, in concluding anything firm about the medals themselves and when and by whom they were struck. And in a further attempt at meaningful association, too much store is placed on the fact that 'Wedgwood also had a company policy preventing artists from signing their artwork, which explains why these wonderful medals were unsigned' (p. 9, l.h.c.).

So far as the quoted passage from the Wedgwood correspondence is concerned, one could argue that he may simply have been considering the question of striking medals, perhaps with a view to developing it as part of his business, which may or may not explain why he makes no specific mention of a medal. One also needs to consider who is commissioning these medals in the first place and why it is that an established firm of medallists, that would no doubt do the job more efficiently, were bypassed, if indeed they were, in favour of Wedgwood. Political and diplomatic niceties do not enter into the equation, as the Pingos, for example, can be directly associated with the production of a portrait medal of Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Jacobite Pretender in 1750, without legend and unsigned, but treasonable none the less.* One also has to consider the question of if the firm of Wedgwood was responsible for this significant group of medals, could we reasonably expect evidence of this to have

emerged from their voluminous and much-trawled records, or to have found evidence of their association in third party manuscripts, such as those of the nobility, who were actively pursuing medals at this time, and for whom the production of such medals might have been expected to generate comment.

My own experience working on the Pingo family and the principal discovery concerning the family history provides a salutary lesson in the care needed when interpreting manuscript information. The Pingos are a well known family of coin and medal engravers working for much of the second half of the eighteenth century, both for the Mint and in a private capacity, having, it had long been believed, come to England from Italy in the 1740s. Their signed medallic work is a matter of record, and their background, such as it was known, could be found written in stone in both Leonard Forrer's *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists* (1909) and the principal repository for biographical information in the United Kingdom, the *Dictionary of National Biography*. It has since been recited *ad nauseum* in numerous specialist and general publications over the last hundred years.

The first published mention of the Pingo biography and their Italian roots occurs in *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain* (volume 2, page 735), which was compiled by Edward Hawkins, completed after his death by Augustus W. Franks and Herbert Grueber, and published in 1885. My own research on the Pingo family started in 1990 and it was not to be long before the startling discovery was made of a signed apprenticeship indenture for Thomas Pingo, irrefutably placing him in the City of London in 1706. This was followed by the appearance of a bracket clock signed by Richard Pingo, placing this member and previous generation of the family in Pall Mall, a couple of miles from Thomas, in the 1680s. Not to mention various 17th and early 18th century genealogical records for the family

in various parts of London, and much, much more, taking them back to at least the 16th century and the county of Devon in south-west England.**

The long-standing Italian attribution, now lying in tatters, appears to have its origins in an exchange of correspondence published in the 1850s and 1860s in a journal called *Notes and Queries*, in which Edward Hawkins - busy gathering information for *Medallic Illustrations* - participated. The crux of this exchange did no more than link a medal of suggested Italian provenance with the Pingos, whose name irresistibly, and in this instance crucially, invited a foreign attribution.***

An understandable desire for answers can have a tendency for colouring our judgment and Edward Hawkins - an eminent numismatist - seduced by no more than circumstantial evidence, compelling though it was, had fallen into a trap, and one in which many of us might have fallen. Staring 2 plus 2 in the face, he came up with 5 for an answer, and at the stroke of a pen re-wrote the Pingo history.

I would therefore urge some caution, and the requirement of firm evidence, before we are able to confidently link the Washington, Franklin, Hume and D'Eon medals with the names of Wedgwood and Bentley, as the firm wholly or partly responsible for their design or manufacture.

In his discussion of the typography and portraits on these extraordinary medals, Tony Lopez is to be thanked for providing a model of analysis which will no doubt come to serve us well in looking at other 'problematic' medals and some of the seemingly intractable issues that they raise. He has also succeeded in further opening up the debate as to the whys and wherefores of these medals, whose fascination grows ever stronger, but for which I feel confirmation of authorship still eludes us.

Christopher Eimer

**The Pingo Family and Medal Making in 18th-Century Britain*, by C. Eimer (London, 1998), published by the British Art Medal Trust, Corpus # 5.

** *op. cit*, p. 10.

*** *op. cit*, p.11.

We are indebted to Chris for taking the time to analyze and reply to an article, an effort which we would wish more members to make. As to the specifics of his arguments: yes the technology of working in metal differs greatly from the technology of working in ceramics but Tony Lopez introduces the new (to me, at least) discovery of the friendship between Boulton and Wedgwood. Surely this connection could have served to bridge the technology gap. This is not proof but it is a good clue.

The peculiarities of the medals in question—their convexity and the odd letter punches, to name two—would seem to eliminate the major medal manufacturers of the time, i.e., Boulton and the British Mint. Who else, Mssrs. Lopez and Eimer, were doing quality work in Great Britain at the time?—Ye editor

Letters to the Editor

Hello John,

I am a member of the MCA, a 30 year member of the ANA, and a long-standing member of the ANS and TAMS. Over the years I have assembled a "reverse type set" of 19th century Indian Peace Medals in copper-bronzed which I have periodically exhibited at the Rochester Numismatic Association's annual Coin Show. Two years ago I was fortunate to win a pristine 75mm copper-bronzed Canadian "Indian Treaty" medal dated 187-(blank) in a Stack's auction to add to my collection.

Happily, I just purchased a magnificent, almost pristine copper-bronzed 1814 George III Indian P peace medal (photo attached) from Hedley Betts, with a return privilege, for a lot of money. I tried to locate in Rochester, NY a copy of your book "The Indian Peace Medals of George III ..." for reference, and possibly to add to my library, with no success and the ANA library has their copy in the reference-only section and will not ship it to me. So, I would like to impose upon you with a few questions that I hope you will endeavor to answer:

1. Are you aware of any counterfeits of this medal in copper-bronzed that would cause me to worry about its authenticity?

2. Is this very medal in your census? Hedley stated that he recently obtained it from a dealer in England and did not know its provenance.

3. Were the copper-bronzed medals produced around 1814, contemporary with the silver awarded medals for collectors as were the U.S. IP copper-bronzed medals, or did the British Mint continue to mint the "bronzes" for collectors during the 19th century? I have not yet received the medal and certainly hope it isn't a 20th century restrike or counterfeit.

Unfortunately I will miss the MCA Members' Meeting on July 31st but will attend the ANA Convention the following day. If you will be around on Friday, August 1st and are willing to meet me at the Convention, I could bring the medal with me to show you and we can chat about it then.

I anxiously await your response, and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Ken Traub 585-442-7521
Rochester, NY

Ken,

I've seen no counterfeits or fakes, other than those pieces dressed up to appear awarded.

Eimer thinks that the bronze examples were part of Wyon's sample set; Brown thinks that they were used as part of the 100th anniversary of the House of Hanover. Given the relatively large number of bronze specimens, I am inclined to agree with Brown. Your specimen is not in my census but, unless some "rusty" examples show up. I am inclined to believe that all silvers (which became a drug on the market) and all bronzes were made in 1814. Regardless, Wyon did himself (and now you) proud.

Best,

John Adams

P.S. Does your specimen have a number on the edge? Some examples do have this marking—see the first of two offered in Ford XVI.



John:

Since our messages on the Ward medal I read your letter exchange with Ron Bryant in the current issue of *The MCA Advisory* about the Berwind White Coal Mining Company medal. It might interest you that the founder of that company in 1886 was Edward Julius Berwind (1848-1936) who graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1869 and served as a naval officer until 1875. We had two 19th century alumni who built summer cottages on Bellevue Avenue in Newport. The other was Oliver Hazard Perry Belmont, Naval Academy Class of 1880, who built Belcourt, the mansion with the entire first floor devoted to horse stables. The famous Belmont Stakes race is named for his daddy, August Belmont, who married a daughter of Commodore Matthew C. Perry.

With continued best wishes. Jim.

James W. Cheevers

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Jim,

Thanks Jim, this is really interesting. It demonstrates further that each one of these medals has a fascinating story to tell – often including the Naval Academy – if you know the right person to ask!

I look forward to staying in touch, and please let me know if I can ever be helpful to you in exploring the history of any award-related items.

Best,

John Sallay

To Barry Tayman

Hello Barry:

Congratulations on your fine article; and thank you for sending me the issue it appears in.

I've read your information thoroughly, studied the medal's pictures carefully and agree completely with your conclusions. The medal must be one that was presented originally for the treaty signing; and your observation about it having been Bearspaw's is convincing. Your suggestion that the hand engraving was likely done locally is consistent with the donor and the medal residing in the area. The engraved spelling of the Indian name differing from reports is interesting, but does not detract from the authenticity. Whether the engraver erred or was given incorrect instructions is of minor concern.

So, how did the presentation come into being? It would seem that the donor side would have initiated the event. If this were true, then the Indians, unaccustomed to protocol and to the English language, would have needed guidance. You will have seen the name of Norman Luxton in newspaper articles; and you may know that he was owner and publisher of the *Crag and Canyon*. He also had a long association with the natives, and developed the annual Banff Indian Days event. At the 1916 ceremony the Herald says that Luxton "read an address and presented the Duke with a full Indian costume"; and he "introduced them [The royal visitors] to the chiefs." I wonder if Luxton was the Indians' aide for the presentation event. The connection of Luxton to Banff, its tourism and the area's Indians is in:

<http://www.buffalotionsmuseum.ca/bnmhistoryLuxton.html>

Norman Luxton's personal papers are preserved in separated lots at three locations – the Banff Museum, the Glenbow, Calgary and the Canadian Archives, Ottawa. With his involvement in the 1916, event one could

expect, that somewhere, there is his record of what was planned and what transpired. What puzzles me is that his newspaper appears not to have mentioned the medal's provenance or the unique aspect of it being returned as an award to the Duke – both were noteworthy and newsworthy facts.

There are some curious things about spellings that appear in the articles. We see variations for Stoney and for Bearspaw – perhaps generally accepted spellings hadn't developed by that time.

<http://www.stoneynation.com/aboutus.html> is the Stoney Nation Website, which you likely know.

I imagine that your solving the "one mystery [that] still remains" would be the icing. I hope my suggestions to look into the Luxton files might prove fruitful.

I did refer to some local resources in Calgary – Aston, Sir George, *His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught and Strathern* (1929), Franklin, Noble, *Witness of a Century* (1993) and the Canadian Pacific Railway *Souvenir Time Table of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught* across Canada 1916. Neither of the two biographies mention the medal nor his honorary chieftom; and the time table says only that the stop in Banff was a fifteen day interval for holiday. A *Calgary Herald* article says that on arrival at Banff, two coaches of the Royal Train were detached to travel the Duke (back) to Calgary for civic functions and then return him to his family – thin stuff for your quest.

Barrie Renwick

Mr. Renwick is an acknowledged expert in Canadiana.—ed.

To Ben Weiss

Ben,

I am an editor at DMOZ.org. I added your site to the directory a while back and today I have promoted it to "Cool," which in other words puts it at the top of the listings in the following category

Recreation: Collecting: Coins: Medals and Tokens

http://editors.dmoz.org/Recreation/Collecting/Coins/Medals_and_Tokens/

You have a great site.

> =====

If you wish to display the Open Directory Cool Site award, please download the award and HTML from <http://dmoz.org/cool.html>. For a link to the category page, use: a href="http://dmoz.org/Recreation/Collecting/Coins/Medals_and_Tokens/">Open Directory Recreation/Collecting/Coins/Medals_and_Tokens

Hi Guys,

We're moving up!

Best wishes,

Ben

Ben,

Outstanding!!! Ever since you took over, I knew that the site was becoming VERY cool, so I'm glad that the outside world is beginning to take notice. Please keep up the great work!

John Sallay

Hi,

For us twits, what does that mean?

John Adams

John,

DMOZ is basically an organized index of the best stuff on the web, run by a group of volunteers. For a basic description of what it is and the philosophy behind it (vs. Google's) see <http://www.dmoz.org/about.html>. I don't know how many people actually use this directory, compared with Google and other search engines, but it is quite good.

Then look at the top of the overall hierarchy at <http://www.dmoz.org/> and where the MCA sits relative to the relevant universe of token and medal websites at http://www.dmoz.org/Recreation/Collecting/Coins/Medals_and_Tokens/

I hope that give you a feel, but let me know if you'd like to know more.

Best,

John Sallay

From Dave Bowers

Hi,

I bought this from Tony Terranova in Baltimore. I think the ANA has a similar one, but can't find out about it on line. And, if anyone has any information, please advise. Note it is signed Laura Gardin, not Laura Gardin Fraser.

MEDAL • NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES 50.8 MM GOLD BY LAURA GARDIN • 10 kt gold medal, Medallie Art Co., about 3 oz, presented to Dean Rusk. • Time Magazine, November 26, 1964: At a dinner in Manhattan, the National Institute of Social Sciences honored Secretary of State

Dean Rusk, 55, Senator Margaret Chase Smith, 66, A. T. & T. Chairman Frederick Kappel, 62, and that noted social scientist, Bob Hope, 61. Cracked Hope, as he accepted his award (for his "contribution to the nation's values"), "I thought this should go to Cassius Clay—for his great medical discovery, the first man to get a hernia through talking." Hope had his doubts about Kappel: "I don't see how you can give a humanitarian award to a man who had anything to do with digit dialing." But he felt Senator Smith had made a wonderful try for the presidency: "She didn't know Johnson was going to be the nominee for both parties." Bob also swore that "Rusk said to me, 'You might as well go to Viet Nam—we've tried everything else.'" He set a new style in government investigating techniques as the late Senator Joe McCarthy's boy. He set a new high in settlements this summer, winning \$1,500 weekly for the estranged wife of Lyricist Alan Jay Lerner

Links:

[1]<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>

[2][http://wmail.airmail.net/javascript:top.opencompose\(\'qdbarchive@metrocast.net](http://wmail.airmail.net/javascript:top.opencompose(\'qdbarchive@metrocast.net)

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[http://wmail.airmail.net/javascript:top.opencompose\(\'kmjaeger@ptd.net](http://wmail.airmail.net/javascript:top.opencompose(\'kmjaeger@ptd.net)



Hi,

Re: Medal of possible interest Neat! New York Times articles about the dinner too, go to the following link, and put "Social Sciences" and "Dean Rusk" together in the 1851-1890 search block and they pop right up.

Katie Jaeger

<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>

Hi Dave et al.

Laura Gardin Fraser's National Institute of Social Sciences medal is a lovely medal and was one of her first major medallic commissions.

In 1912 she did the John Cardinal Farley medallion, and the following year (1913) The Woman's Home Companion Better Babies medal and this National Institute of Social Sciences medal.

The Frasers were married Nov. 27, 1913. Prior to that time she signed her work with her maiden name. Joe Levine sold examples of all these early medals in my PCAC 12/6/03 sale of the Fraser reference collection for my book draft FIRST FAMILY OF U.S. SCULPTURE.

With your permission I'd like to use this awarded medal to Dean Rusk in the book.

Best wishes,

Fred Reed

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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What are your collecting interests?

What would you see highlighted in MCA publications?

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